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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000093

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/UMB, DRL/AE, G/TIP, OBO

E.O. 12958: Declassify 02/11/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [ABLD](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: PM UPDATED ON TIP QUESTIONS, REFERS NEC
TO DEPUTY, PROMISES NDI CONSULTATION, CALLS RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS "PROVOCATION"

REFS: A. State 5577 B. Chisinau 0020 C. 08
Chisinau 1235
[D](#). 08 Chisinau 1156

Classified by Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry under
1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a February 5 meeting with the
Ambassador, Prime Minister Greceanii responded
positively to USG requests for information on
Government of Moldova (GOM) actions against
trafficking in persons; reacted sharply to
allegations of GOM human rights violations as
"provocations"; promised to consult with the
Minister of Justice regarding National Democratic
Institute (NDI) registration and the NDI country
director's residence permit; said she would look
into the tax problems of two USG-supported
projects; and referred the issue of the new
embassy compound (NEC) to First Deputy Prime
Minister Dodon. End summary.

PM Positive on TIP Requests

[1](#)2. (C) The Prime Minister responded positively to
requests for updated information on alleged
complicity in TIP by GOM officials, vetting of
anti-trafficking officials, and establishment of
procedures for anonymous reporting of suspected
acts of trafficking. The Ambassador, while
praising GOM progress in repatriating and
rehabilitating victims of trafficking, urged the
GOM not to slacken the pace, in light of ref A,
which describes the new legal stipulation that
countries on Tier 2 Watch List for two years in a
row be placed automatically on Tier 3.

PM Refutes Intimidation as Provocation

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador raised two incidents of
intimidation: questioning by "security officials"
of a Peace Corps volunteer's (PCV) host family
regarding the PCV's political activities and
possession of recording equipment; and the GOM's
inaction following the beating of (and use of mace
against) peaceful demonstrators outside the
Prosecutor General's Office. (Note: The YouTube
video of the event showed clearly that one
attacker, who was caught by demonstrators, stating
that he had been paid 1,000 lei--approximately USD
95--to beat the protestors; however, he did not
identify those who paid. Although demonstrators
called for police assistance against the
attackers, none came. End note.) The Prime
Minister noted that she would ensure that the PCV

was protected from harassment, and opined that the report might be a provocation and that she could not imagine that an intelligence official would be asking such questions.

14. (C) The Prime Minister responded more sharply to the issue of the protesters and those who attacked them, labeling the attackers as provocateurs trying to damage Moldova's image, and connecting them to unnamed political parties who use "evil methods." To the Ambassador's recommendation that the GOM could at least have condemned the attack, she replied that the GOM first needed to investigate the incident.

NDI and VAT: Consultation and Solution Promised

15. (C) Regarding the GOM's failure to register NDI and renew the work and residence permit of NDI Country Director Alex Grigorievs (refs B and C), the Prime Minister responded to the Ambassador's comment that the delays were creating an unnecessarily negative impression in Washington: she stated that she would contact the Minister of Justice, and noted that NDI and Grigorievs should be told why their applications were refused. She further noted that NDI "has no bad records," and that she would ask the Minister of Justice to contact the Ambassador. (Comment: This is not the first time that we have heard some sort of support from high-level Moldovan officials--

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including the Foreign Minister, Presidential Advisor Stati, and the President himself. Thus far, however, expressions of support have not been followed by positive action to register NDI and provide Grigorievs with legal status in the country. End comment.)

16. (C) The Prime Minister appeared surprised when she heard that vendors were still charging value-added tax (VAT) on purchases made by construction companies working on two projects under the auspices of the Office of Defense Cooperation. (Note: Both projects--the building of a fire station and reconstruction of a radioactive waste reconditioning facility--are included in a GOM list of activities exempted from VAT. End note.) Greceanii promised that she would clarify the matter immediately.

PM Refers NEC Issue to First Deputy Prime Minister

17. (C) When the Ambassador asked why the GOM had put up for tender a site which it had promised for a NEC (ref D), the Prime Minister at first noted that there had been no bidders by the January 30 deadline. She then referred the issue to the Ambassador's meeting planned for the next day with First Deputy Prime Minister Dodon.

Comment

18. (C) Greceanii made most of her comments with her usual air of competence and helpfulness. With her responses regarding the PCV, NDI, and the beaten demonstrators, she displayed a defensiveness that may have been the product of pre-election jitters. Her reaction may also have been sharpened by a sense that the Party of Communists was continuing its steady slide from its 2001 high point of support among voters, to

the possibility that its probable plurality of votes would be insufficient to find the partners for a coalition government. We hope that she genuinely understands how damaging pre-election heavy handedness has been to Moldova's image.

CHAUDHRY